alton
NATURAL GAS STORAGE L.P.
an AltaGas business

We submitted the following information to The Chronicle Herald and the Truro Daily News in response to articles about the Alton Natural Gas Storage Project. Both newspapers recently published the information.

Explaining natural gas storage

There have been many opinions expressed in recent months about the Alton Natural Gas Storage Project near Stewiacke, NS.

In light of a recent article in The Chronicle Herald/Truro Daily News, ("Alton gas project worries geologist," September 25, 2017), it's important to correct the record and share information about Alton's geology and natural gas storage.

The natural gas storage caverns at Alton will be located about one kilometre underground. The geological structure at Alton is a salt pillow contained entirely within the Stewiacke formation of the Windsor group. It is an ideal salt band for natural gas storage caverns. Downhole information on the wells drilled at Alton shows the necessary continuity of formations to produce viable caverns.

Salt is often found in large, relatively homogeneous deposits. Salt shapes in a plastic manner throughout geological periods (millions of years) and is devoid of fractures. Salt forms a tight seal through which stored gas can't escape.

You can't compare Alton to a project from 40 years ago in Cape Breton, as the article did. Information available on the NS Department of Natural Resources website regarding the Cape Breton project shows that it was successfully pressure tested but abandoned for commercial, not technical reasons.

Expert oversight monitors Alton's activities, including independent experts retained by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to review the cavern design and operations. The third-party's approval for Alton was received in the summer of 2016 after extensive review of the cavern design and the salt formation.

Alton is a modern, purpose-built facility for natural gas and must adhere to a rigorous Canadian regulatory framework. The design and operation of cavern storage facilities must conform to the requirements of CSA Standard Z341, Storage of Hydrocarbons in Underground Formations. Alton Natural Gas Storage will meet or exceed CSA Z341 and all federal and Nova Scotia regulations. The standard requires that extensive geological analysis be undertaken and reviewed by the regulatory authority.

Storing natural gas in salt caverns deep underground is a secure and proven storage method. Salt caverns in geologic basins in Alberta, Saskatchewan, throughout the U.S. and around the world have been operating safely, dating back in many cases over 60 years.

The Canadian Gas Association (www.cga.ca) has helpful materials that explain natural gas storage. In Nova Scotia, natural gas storage will help ensure this reliable, clean and affordable fuel will be available for thousands of local customers year-round.

Visit the Alton project's website to learn more, www.altonnaturalgasstorage.ca

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